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Chairman: Mr. Sharma ..... (Nepal)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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The meeting was called to order at 9.35 a.m.

Agenda item 134: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (A/57/619 and A/57/633)

1. **Ms. Pollard** (Director of the Peacekeeping Financing Division), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on financing arrangements for the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone for the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 (A/57/619), said that, by its resolution 56/251 B, the General Assembly had appropriated $669,476,400 gross ($662,779,200 net), for the maintenance of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) for the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003, and a further $30,361,900 gross ($26,380,600 net), for the support account for peacekeeping operations and the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi. Pursuant to that resolution, assessments approved for UNAMSIL for the period totalled $502,107,300 gross ($497,084,400 net), leaving an unassessed balance of $167,369,100 gross ($165,694,800 net). The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) had recommended that the General Assembly should consider the apportionment of the balance in connection with possible adjustments to the Mission's military and civilian components.

2. The Security Council, in resolution 1436 (2002), had extended the mandate of UNAMSIL for six months. Based on that resolution and the current status of expenditure for UNAMSIL, requirements for the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 were estimated at $602,912,100 gross ($596,618,400 net).

3. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on financing arrangements for the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone for the period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2003 (A/57/633), said that ACABQ recommended an additional assessment of $90 million. When ACABQ had made its original recommendation that $167,369,100 million should remain unassessed pending resubmission of the request, it had been aware that changes to the numerical strength of the Mission were expected. At it had turned out, the Secretary-General had indicated an unencumbered balance of $66,564,300; that had been taken into account in the request for $100,804,800. However, in the light of the considerations set out in paragraph 4 of its report, the current $461.6 million in unliquidated obligations and the $9.5 million in "pre-encumbrances" (amounts held in expectation of later disbursement), ACABQ recommended an assessment of $90 million, which was lower than the request of $100,804,800. That was unlikely to pose problems for UNAMSIL, as past experience indicated that sums were often left over from unliquidated obligations. In any event the Secretary-General had the option to return to the General Assembly, through ACABQ, when the Mission's requirements were discussed in February/March 2003.

4. **Ms. Udo** (Nigeria) said that her delegation shared the view expressed by ACABQ in paragraph 4 of its report that submissions for financial arrangements should be accompanied by supporting information. No reason had been offered for the failure to supply such information, but that did not diminish the success of UNAMSIL. The Mission deserved continued support, and approval of its request for an appropriation of $100,804,800 was a way of demonstrating such support. The expectations which the United Nations in general and the Security Council in particular had placed upon UNAMSIL must not be compromised through under-funding, especially at a time when much value was being placed on the connection between peace and development and the need to eliminate conflict in the troublespots of the world.

5. Her delegation wished to have an assessment of the consequences of following the recommendation of ACABQ and authorizing an appropriation of $90 million instead of the $100.8 million originally requested. The ongoing drawdown of the Mission was to be based on yet-to-be-determined benchmarks, and it would therefore be more prudent to approve the allocation requested in order to prevent any security threats which might arise because of the drawdown. The Mission would of course be required to return any unused sums to the Organization.

6. Her delegation also welcomed the six-month extension of the mandate of UNAMSIL by the Security Council in resolution 1436 (2002) as a positive step, although it recognized that UNAMSIL would need more time to ensure that the gains made were not jeopardized by a hasty withdrawal.

7. **Ms. Lock** (South Africa) said that her delegation attached great importance to peacekeeping operations, particularly in Africa. It shared the concern of ACABQ

that not enough information on the financial performance and expenditure of UNAMSIL had been supplied to justify the allocation requested, but emphasized that that should not prevent the Committee from reaching a decision on what was an important matter. There should be discussion of the implications of approving an appropriation of $90 million instead of the requested $100.8 million during the informal consultations to ensure that the Committee did not make a decision which impaired the ability of the Mission to fulfil its mandate.

8. **Ms. Pollard** (Director of the Peacekeeping Financing Division) said that the Secretariat would do its best to operate using an appropriation of $90 million if that was what the General Assembly approved. The allocation for military staff on the ground was currently fully obligated. If drawdown of the Mission was more rapid than originally planned, the Mission could function with the allocation it had. The situation could not be predicted and the Secretariat would therefore return to ACABQ in February 2003 at the opening of the peacekeeping review.

Agenda item 112: Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*)

Estimates in respect of matters of which the Security Council is seized (*continued*) (A/57/7/Add.17; A/C.5/57/23)

First performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (*continued*) (A/57/7/Add.16 and A/57/616)

9. **Mr. Sun** Xudong (China) said that his delegation had a number of concerns about the first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (A/57/616). First was the size of the adjustments to appropriations proposed by the Secretary-General: the increase of $215,140,000 would bring total expenditure to $2,914,407,800. While some elements of that increase, such as exchange-rate fluctuations and inflation, were unpredictable, efforts should be made to accommodate the limits established once a programme budget had been approved — in other words, to do more with less. Second was the decrease in income from services to the public; while noting that the situation was expected to improve in 2003 relative to 2002, he hoped that the Secretariat would investigate the reasons for the decline and seek to improve income from that source. Third was the sum involved in the recommendation of the International Civil Service Commission regarding net remuneration, although he agreed with ACABQ that the final increase would not be known until the General Assembly had taken a decision on the recommendation. The fourth concern was that the United Nations, like all international organizations, should seek to make optimum use of its resources.

10. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that consideration of the revised appropriations set out in the first performance report on the programme budget for 2002-2003 was particularly important in the light of the cuts resulting from General Assembly resolution 56/253. That resolution had forced the curtailment of some activities of the Organization, but had also made the funding of other activities which drew heavily on the budget more unpredictable.

11. The effects of some of the reductions imposed by the General Assembly in resolution 56/253 had been offset by alternative measures, for example in the case of audit services, where the use of external auditors was intended to maintain the scope and quality of that important activity. Her delegation regretted that the same approach had not been used in other areas, such as conference and support services, where account should be taken of the requests made by the General Assembly in resolutions 56/254 D and 56/287.

12. With regard to the services extended to the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the revised estimate for the remainder of 2002, and beyond that to the end of the biennium, had been calculated without knowing the outcome of the Security Council review of that Committee's structure and activities, which was not due to take place until April 2003. Her delegation agreed with the opinion expressed by ACABQ in paragraph 9 of its report (A/57/7/Add.16) that the estimated requirements might need to be revised in the light of the Security Council review. Additional requirements connected with matters of which the Security Council was seized, meanwhile, must be considered in the light of the reports of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/57/23) and of ACABQ (A/57/7/Add.17) on that matter.

13. Noting that the realized vacancy rates for all categories of staff had been higher than those budgeted for in General Assembly resolution 56/253, thus giving rise to additional requirements, her delegation agreed

with the findings of ACABQ: vacancies in a number of sections appeared to be quite high and more detailed information should be provided in future.

14. The considerable increases in requirements caused by changes in exchange rates, prices and inflation would place a burden on the programme budget for the current biennium and make it difficult to offset the effects of budget cuts. Her delegation would work constructively to seek a solution which would enable additional requirements to be met without impairing the implementation of the Organization's mandates for the biennium.

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (continued) (A/57/7/Add.15; A/57/479, A/C.5/57/L.38)

15. **Mr. Pulido León** (Venezuela) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/57/L.38, on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

16. **Mr. Stoffer** (United States of America) expressed surprise at the Committee's departure from its usual practice of holding informal consultations on a draft resolution before it was considered at a formal meeting. His delegation would have welcomed the opportunity to comment on certain provisions of the draft text to which it could not subscribe.

17. **Mr. Christiansen** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, before the Committee proceeded any further, the Chairman should report to members on the outcome of his discussions with the President of the General Assembly and with the Chairman of the Second Committee on the issue of UNITAR.

18. **Mr. Kramer** (Canada) questioned the basis on which the Committee was being asked to consider the draft resolution. Both the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/479) and the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/57/7/Add.15) were concerned with the rental rates and maintenance costs of UNITAR and there was no indication that the Institute's Board of Trustees had even discussed the matter. It was important for the Committee to have as much information as possible before it could address the issue.

19. **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico) proposed that consideration of the draft resolution should be deferred.

20. **Mr. Pulido León** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he had submitted the draft text on behalf of the Group of 77 and China without prior knowledge of the Committee's programme of work. The Group's objective was to expedite the work of the Committee by submitting a concrete and viable proposal on UNITAR, an organization that provided valuable training and research services to all Member States. It was difficult to justify earmarking for the payment of rental and maintenance costs resources that could otherwise be used to provide training and research services. His understanding was that, in its consideration of the issue, the Second Committee would not make any proposals that contained financial implications, such proposals being within the purview of the Fifth Committee.

21. **Ms. Udo** (Nigeria) said that her delegation shared the views just expressed by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

22. **Ms. Buergo Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that the draft resolution, in which the Group of 77 and China merely sought to address the legitimate concerns that had been raised in the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/479), should serve as a basis for further discussion by the Committee. The current situation again highlighted the need for the Committee to organize its programme of work more carefully.

23. **The Chairman** recalled his statement to the Committee at its 29th meeting to the effect that he had been assured by the Chairman of the Second Committee that, in its consideration of the item on UNITAR, the Second Committee would not touch upon financial matters that were within the purview of the Fifth Committee but would confine its discussions to the substantive issues. It was on that basis that the Bureau had decided to proceed with the consideration of the item at the Committee's current meeting.

24. **Mr. Christiansen** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the assurance that the Second Committee would not touch upon matters that were within the purview of the Fifth Committee. The Fifth Committee should now deal with the item in the normal way by scheduling informal consultations to seek agreement on a draft text, while keeping in mind the text of the draft resolution (A/C.5/57/L.38) that had been introduced by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

25. **Mr. Pulido León** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, in a spirit of cooperation, the Group would agree to the approach suggested by the representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Union, provided that the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/57/L.38 was used as the basis for discussion. The Group of 77 and China was willing to negotiate amendments to the draft text with a view to achieving consensus.

26. **Mr. Christiansen** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, since the draft resolution had already been formally introduced, the correct procedure would now be for the Controller to inform the Committee of its programme budget implications. It would, of course, be much simpler if the draft resolution were simply withdrawn by its sponsor, on the understanding that the elements it contained would be borne in mind during the informal consultations.

27. **Mr. Pulido León** (Venezuela) said that care had been taken to ensure that the proposal contained no programme budget implications for 2003. Financial implications would arise only in the regular budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

28. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, Controller) said that, since the text of the draft resolution had only just been made available, he would need some time to prepare a statement of its programme budget implications.

29. **Mr. Stoffer** (United States of America) said that, given the limited time available, the best solution would be for the draft text to be withdrawn by its sponsor.

30. **Mr. Christiansen** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union, asked when the statement of programme budget implications and the related report of the Advisory Committee would be available. While he had no comment to make at the current stage on the substance of the draft, he wished to note that the text was causing delay and confusion in the Committee. It might therefore be easier for its sponsor to simply withdraw it.

31. **Mr. Acakpo-Satchivi** (Secretary of the Committee), commenting on a question of procedure, reminded members of the Committee that the Advisory Committee could not be requested to give an opinion on a draft text that was still under discussion in the Committee and therefore subject to change at any time.

32. **Mr. Pulido León** (Venezuela), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it was not the intention of the Group of 77 and China to create confusion. The only issue that remained to be clarified was that of the programme budget implications of the draft resolution.

33. **Mr. Tootoonchian** (Islamic Republic of Iran) asked whether the Committee had received any assurances that the draft resolution to be submitted by the Second Committee on the item would contain no programme budget implications.

34. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that the apparent confusion was in reality a storm in a teacup. The Bureau had already scheduled informal consultations on the item and the debate should therefore continue in that forum. The experience merely highlighted the need for careful planning of the Committee's programme of work for the following week.

35. **Mr. Chaudhry** (Pakistan) reminded the Committee of the history behind the draft resolution, which had not emerged from a vacuum. The Group of 77 and China had sought an acknowledgement of the problems that UNITAR was facing. It had been told in the Second Committee that the matter should be referred to the Fifth Committee. While the Group had consciously sought to avoid any programme budget implications for 2003, it was possible that the provisions of paragraph 3 of the draft text did contain some financial implications. The Group was willing to cooperate on language to address that issue. However, it deplored the manoeuvres that seemed intended precisely to avoid such cooperation and to cause delays and confusion. Such an attitude was manifestly unfair.

36. **Mr. Christiansen** (Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that his main concern was to expedite the Committee's work while ensuring that the proper procedures were respected. The existence of a draft text even before the start of the informal consultations gave rise to a formal requirement for a statement of programme budget implications and the related report of the Advisory Committee. The Committee should consider instead the draft text that emerged from the informal consultations.

37. **Mr. Pulido León** (Venezuela) said that the Group of 77 and China would have no objections to the

holding of informal consultations, but wished to retain the current draft text, subject to the revision of the language of paragraph 3. If consensus was reached on another text in the informal consultations, then the Group of 77 and China would willingly withdraw the current draft.

38. **The Chairman** said that informal consultations coordinated by Mr. Eduardo Ramos (Portugal) would be held on the item. He took note of the declared willingness of the Group of 77 and China to withdraw the current text if a consensus on another draft resolution emerged during the consultations.

Organization of work

39. **The Chairman** said that he had given a commitment to the President of the General Assembly that, subject to the availability of the required documentation, the Committee would complete its work by 12 December.

40. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that it was important for the Committee to identify the reasons for the delay in completing its work. Particular emphasis should be placed on the unavailability of documents.

41. **Ms. Lock** (South Africa) requested that delegations should be advised sufficiently in advance of the list of issues to be deferred to a resumed or subsequent session of the General Assembly in order to allow them enough time to review the list.

42. **The Chairman** said that the Bureau would have to wait until a day or two before the end of the main part of the current session before it could take any intelligent decision on which items to propose for deferral.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.